

Derek R. Wagner

Special Counsel

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Practices

Workers' Compensation

Bar Admissions

North Carolina State Bar

Education

J.D., Charlotte School of Law, 2016
B.A., Eastern Michigan University, 2013

Overview

Derek Wagner approaches workers' compensation defense the way he approaches everything else in life; with preparation, an eye for detail, and a steady hand under pressure. He brings a careful balance of legal analysis, medical understanding, and practical judgment to every matter that crosses his desk.

What led Derek to practice law is the same thing that keeps him engaged: no two cases are alike. Complex medical records, evolving treatment issues, shifting workplace facts, and novel legal questions require him to think both precisely and strategically. He helps clients assess risk, build sound defense strategies, and work toward efficient resolutions, never losing sight of the bigger picture while managing the details that matter most.

Before joining Hedrick Gardner, Derek built his workers' compensation foundation in the Charlotte area, developing the client counseling and litigation skills that now define his practice. A notable moment in that development came when he successfully argued a workers' compensation case before the North Carolina Court of Appeals that provided important guidance on the compensability of injuries sustained by traveling employees. See *McSwain v. Industrial Commercial Sales & Service, LLC* (2020).

Derek earned his Bachelor of Arts from Eastern Michigan University and his Juris Doctor from Charlotte School of Law in 2016. He has been recognized by his peers through selection to the North Carolina *Super Lawyers*® Rising Stars list in workers' compensation (2023).

Outside the office, Derek and his wife spend their time chasing their young son through family adventures, getting outdoors, and, when the schedule allows, traveling to the shores of Hilton Head Island.

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Awards & Honors

- North Carolina Super Lawyers® Rising Stars list, 2023

Involvement

- North Carolina Bar Association
- Mecklenburg County Bar Association

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